

First District Public Affairs
U.S. Coast Guard

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
**United States
Coast Guard**



Press Release

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Coast Guard holds shipment of lemons to ensure safety

NEW YORK - The Coast Guard escorted the container ship *CSAV Rio Puelo* to the Maher Terminal at the Port of Newark, N.J., today after holding the ship at Ambrose Anchorage since Saturday due to an unconfirmed anonymous report involving containers of contaminated lemons on board. In coordination with federal state and local authorities the containers' contents will be examined, fumigated, and destroyed using a carefully developed process that puts public safety and port security first.

The Coast Guard was alerted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on July 29 that they received a report that one of five containers carrying lemons aboard the *CSAV Rio Puelo* contained an unknown "harmful biological substance."

Before the vessel arrived, the Coast Guard's Captain of the Port of New York formed a Unified Command to manage any hazards in careful coordination with the States of New York and New Jersey, and with a wide array of federal, state and local agencies and port partners.

Since its arrival, the Coast Guard has held the vessel at anchorage under a Captain of the Port order with a boarding team on the vessel. A Coast Guard Cutter has also remained on scene. The crew of the Marshall Islands-flagged vessel was cooperative through the process. The Coast Guard's Atlantic Strike Team boarded the vessel on Saturday and conducted screening tests for any biological hazards. These tests did not indicate any hazards.

Rear Admiral David Pekoske, Commander of the Coast Guard's First District, noted: "Ensuring the safety and security of the Ports of New York and New Jersey has been our primary focus. The Captain of the Port and the members of the Unified Command are responding to this situation with the utmost care to ensure a safe and secure resolution of the situation."

"The Coast Guard is ensuring the vessel has a safe transit into port, and we are taking every precaution in handling the containers and the safe disposal of their contents," said Captain Glenn Wiltshire, Coast Guard Captain of the Port of New York.

The containers will be scanned using the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency's Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS), then fumigated with chlorine dioxide gas to kill any biological agents that may be present. The containers will then be taken to an incinerator two miles away, where the lemons will be destroyed. The containers will also be decontaminated and destroyed.

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Media Advisory: The Coast Guard will document this process using both still and video imagery for subsequent release. Media inquires should be directed to (212) 668-7114 or to (617) 223-8515.

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